

Week Ending Friday, December 6, 2002

Proclamation 7631—World AIDS Day, 2002

November 27, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has taken the lives of more than 20 million people and is projected to take millions more. On World AIDS Day, countries around the world are united to support the individuals, families, and communities affected by this disease, and to renew our commitment to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, developing and delivering more effective treatments, and finding a cure.

To support our struggle against HIV/AIDS, we must call upon the compassion, energy, and generosity of all people. Through their service and dedication, faith-based and volunteer organizations are providing local and global communities with strategies to confront the HIV/AIDS pandemic. By responding to the needs of their neighbors, these organizations and individual citizens offer invaluable support and hope to countless people. These organizations also help overcome dangerous barriers to HIV prevention, care, and treatment such as the stigma and discrimination that often attaches to those suffering from HIV/AIDS. By raising awareness and promoting acceptance of people living with HIV/AIDS, we help improve the lives of millions of people around the world and demonstrate the compassion of our Nation.

My Administration remains strongly committed to supporting research that treats those living with HIV/AIDS, prevents the spread of this disease, and that can develop a cure. For this coming year, my Administration has requested \$2.9 billion for research on vaccines and treatments to combat the disease. This is a significant increase over

prior year funding for these efforts, and expresses my Administration's commitment to helping find a cure.

To help stop the global spread of AIDS we must prevent mothers from passing the HIV virus to their children. My Administration has committed \$500 million to the new International Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative, which will focus on countries in Africa and the Caribbean where the problem is the most severe. This Initiative seeks to treat 1 million women annually and to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS by 40 percent within 5 years. It also increases the availability of preventative care and drug treatment therapy, and seeks to improve critical healthcare delivery systems. The International Mother and Child Prevention Initiative will save thousands of lives, and assist our vital effort to overcome the global devastation of HIV/AIDS.

The United States intends to provide more than \$1.3 billion in 2003 to international efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, a 30 percent increase over the prior year's commitment. I was very pleased to help launch the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria together with U.N. Secretary-General Annan and Nigerian President Obasanjo. My Administration has since then pledged \$500 million to the Global Fund, and we are committed to further support the Fund as it continues to demonstrate its success.

On World AIDS Day, I urge world leaders and citizens to join the efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. By working together, we can provide hope and comfort to all those affected by this devastating disease.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 1, 2002, as World AIDS Day. I invite the Governors of the States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other territories

subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in reaffirming our commitment to combating HIV/AIDS. I encourage all Americans to participate in appropriate commemorative programs and ceremonies in houses of worship, workplaces, and other community centers to remember those who have lost their lives to this deadly disease and to comfort and support those living with and impacted by HIV/AIDS.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 3, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 29, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on December 4. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Plan for Locality Pay Increases for Civilian Federal Employees

November 27, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for locality pay increases payable to civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule (GS) pay system in January 2003.

Under title 5, United States Code, civilian Federal employees covered by the GS pay system would receive a two-part pay increase in January 2003: (1) a 3.1 percent across-the-board increase in scheduled GS rates of basic pay linked to the part of the Employment Cost Index (ECI) that deals with changes in the wages and salaries of private industry workers, and (2) a locality pay increase based on Bureau of Labor Statistics' salary surveys. For Federal employees covered by the locality pay system, the overall average pay increase would be about 18.6 percent.

For each part of the two-part pay increase, title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement an alternative pay plan if I view the adjustment that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate due to "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare." For the reasons described below, I have determined that it would be appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority to limit the locality pay portion of the January 2003 GS pay increase.

A national emergency has existed since September 11, 2001. Full statutory civilian pay increases in 2003 would interfere with our Nation's ability to pursue the war on terrorism. They would cost about \$13.6 billion in 2003 alone—\$11.2 billion more than the 2.6 percent overall Federal civilian pay increase I proposed in my 2003 Budget—and would build in later years. Such cost increases would threaten our efforts against terrorism or force deep cuts in discretionary spending or Federal employment to stay within budget. Neither outcome is acceptable. Therefore, I have determined that a total pay increase of 3.1 percent would be appropriate for GS employees in January 2003.

Because 5 U.S.C. 5303 already mandates an across-the-board GS pay increase of 3.1 percent in January 2003, GS locality-based comparability payments under 5 U.S.C. 5304 must remain at current levels. While my Administration remains committed to the principle of adjusting civilian Federal pay rates in keeping with changes in local labor market rates, our national situation precludes granting larger pay increases to GS employees at this time.

Accordingly, I have determined that:

(1) Under the authority of section 5303(a) of title 5, United States Code, the pay rates for each statutory pay system will be increased by 3.1 percent, effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2003; and

(2) Under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, locality-based comparability payments in the percentages set forth in the attached table will remain in effect in 2003.